

VZCZCXRO0383
RR RUEHLN RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHTA #0609 0801154
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 201154Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY ASTANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2098
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE 0439

UNCLAS ASTANA 000609

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [KZ](#)

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN - WORLD TB DAY ACTIVITIES

REF: State 26078

¶1. Summary: Per reftel, to mark World TB Day, USAID and its partner organizations, in collaboration with the National TB Center and the Almaty City and Oblast Health Departments, are planning a range of activities in Kazakhstan. These activities include announcement of a pilot project on treatment of dual HIV and TB infections, a conference on TB prevention and treatment in Almaty, a regional conference on TB prevention in the town of Talgar in southern Kazakhstan, a number of regional contests to raise awareness of TB and mobilize communities, and a series of TB-awareness public service announcements (PSA's). End summary.

¶2. On March 19, USAID along with national counterparts participated in a national press conference, organized by the National TB Center, to announce the upcoming World TB Day and publicize nation-wide awareness raising activities.

¶3. On March 26, there will be a conference in Almaty on TB prevention which will include city health care providers, TB specialists, and media representatives. USAID will discuss its technical assistance to the National TB Program at the conference.

¶4. A regional scientific-practical conference and a concert will be held on March 27 in the city of Talgar, in southern Almaty Oblast. The theme of the conference is "I can stop TB!" The conference is being organized with USAID funding by Project HOPE, and speakers will include the National TB Center, the National Healthy Lifestyle Center, USAID, and the Red Crescent Society. The target audience includes oblast health care providers, TB specialists, medical students, and the media.

¶5. On March 28, USAID will announce the launch of a pilot project on management of dual TB and HIV infections. The project will run through May 2009 and is being implemented by the USAID-funded TB and HIV/AIDS prevention projects and the Central Asian TB Partnership, together with the Kazakhstan National TB Center and the Republican AIDS Center. The pilot project seeks to improve medical care for patients with dual TB and HIV infections and reduce the rate of mortality caused by TB and HIV. The project launch will be announced at a special event in Almaty with partner organizations.

¶6. Through February-March, USAID, through Project HOPE and in collaboration with national partners (Almaty Oblast TB Dispensary, Almaty Oblast Department of Education, NTBC, National Center for Healthy Lifestyles) supported a number of competitions to draw public attention to the issue of TB, empower health care providers, and mobilize the general public. These included a contest among healthy lifestyle teachers, a competition for the best laboratory chemist and the best general practitioner in TB diagnosis, and a competition for the best TB-information poster.

¶7. In addition, a series of USAID-funded PSA's to raise awareness of TB symptoms and treatment have been prepared by Project HOPE with local partners and will be aired on various regional TV stations in Almaty Oblast in the latter half of March.

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